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ABSTRACT

Noting that sibling conflict, although common, can be stressful to family members, this activity booklet is designed as a resource for families to help children learn how to work out their arguments and enjoy each other's company. The activity booklet provides a read-aloud story for parents to share with their children featuring the Public Broadcasting System characters Arthur and his sister D.W., and includes suggested questions for parents to ask their children. The booklet also contains play ideas for parents and children to engage in together, and suggests books and Arthur videotapes with stories about sibling relationships. Tips for parents include the following: (1) appreciate each child as an individual; (2) encourage your children to help each other; and (3) build a sense of family. The booklet concludes with suggestions for helping siblings resolve conflict: (1) set the ground rules; (2) get the stories out; (3) state the problem and think of several solutions; and (4) choose a solution. (KB)

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Sisters and Brothers: Working Things Out

AN ACTIVITY BOOKLET FOR PARENTS AND KIDS

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How do you help siblings get along better? Look inside for a story, puppets, and some good tips.

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Dear Parents,

As a mother, I'm constantly asking my own children to "please try to get along." As the producer of ARTHUR, I watch Arthur's parents struggle with the same issue. It's a normal part of growing up, but it can be wearing on everyone concerned.

We've designed this Activity Booklet as a resource for families as we all try our best to help our children learn how to work out their arguments and enjoy each other's company. It contains a story, "Arthur's Family Feud," activities for you to do with your kids, and parenting information we hope will be helpful.

We hope you enjoy watching ARTHUR as he, D.W., and Kate continue to learn how to get along with each other as a family.

Sincerely,

Carol Greenwald

Carol Greenwald
Executive Producer, ARTHUR

Arthur's Family Feud

Adapted from the Arthur PBS Series

A Read-Aloud Story for Parents and Kids

soufflé (soo-FLAY): A dish made from beaten eggs and baked until it puffs up.

"Honey, I made the most amazing soufflé!" Arthur's dad says to Mom. "Come and look!"
Just then there's a crash in the kitchen.
"Oh no! My soufflé!" moans Dad.
Mom and Dad run to the kitchen. Soufflé is splattered all over the floor.

"What happened?" asks Mom.
"She did it!" yells Arthur.
"He did it!" cries D.W.
"Enough! No TV for either of you for two months!" says Dad.

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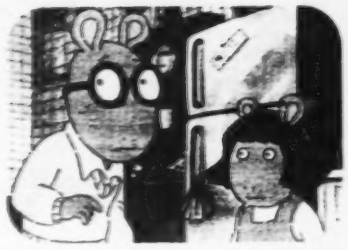
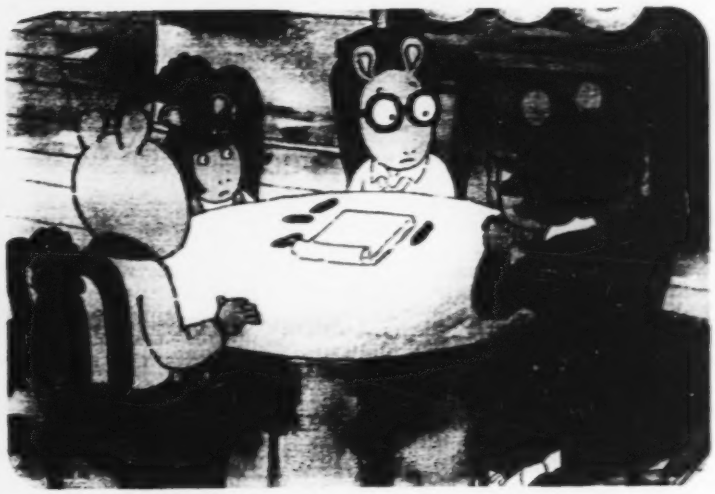
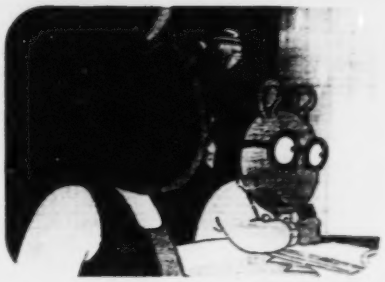
"Why am I being punished?
It was her fault!" Arthur cries.
"Was not!" yells D.W.
"Was too!" shouts Arthur.



"Up to your rooms, kids. You need to cool down.
Then we'll talk this out," says Mom.
"But I have to go to the Bionic Bunny Arcade," cries Arthur.
"Can I still go to the zoo with the Tibbles?" asks D.W.
"We'll see," said Mom. "Now go to your rooms."



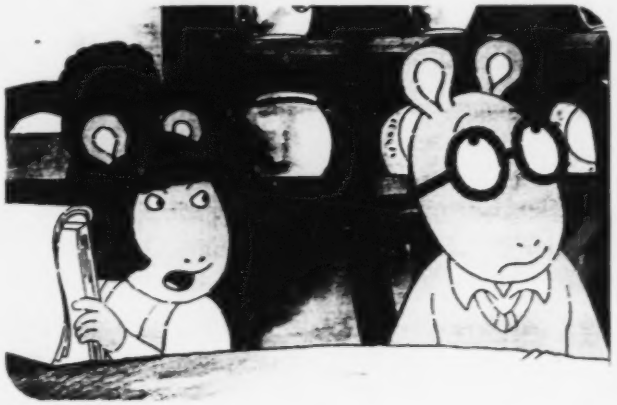
Later, the family has a meeting.
"Arthur can go to the arcade
and D.W. can go to the zoo..."
says Mom.
"...If, and only if, we resolve this
problem," says Dad.
"We want to hear what happened
from both of you," says Mom.
"No interrupting," says Dad.
"We'll flip a coin to see who
goes first."



Arthur goes first. He draws pictures as he explains what happened.
"...then D.W. ran into the kitchen, bumped into the table, and knocked the soufflé on the floor," he says.
"That wasn't what happened at all!" says D.W.
"Remember, D.W., no interrupting," says Mom. "You'll get your chance to talk next."

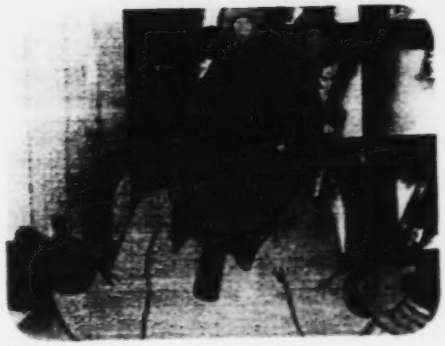
D.W. tells her side of the story. "Arthur pushed me into the table. That's what made the soufflé fall," she says.
"Liar!" shouts Arthur.
"You're the liar!" D.W. yells.

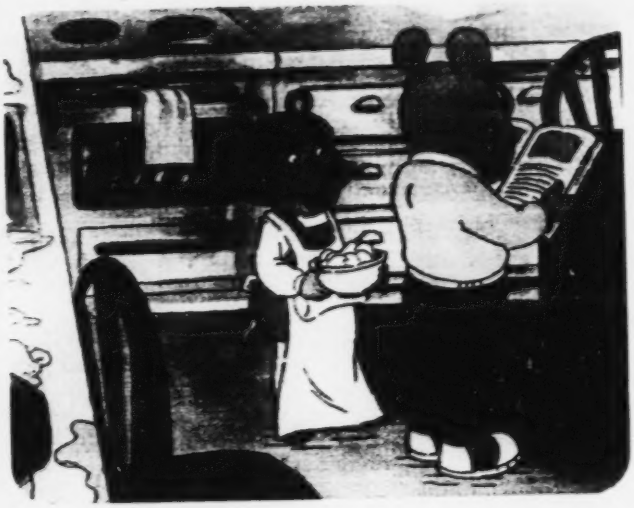
"No shouting, please," says Mom. "By the way, I see that neither of you is wearing shoes. The kitchen floor is pretty slippery when you're running in socks."



What do you think will happen?

"I guess I could have bumped into the table," admits D.W.
"Maybe I slid into D.W.," says Arthur.
"Maybe we both made the soufflé fall."
The kids look at their dad.
They see how sad he looks.
"We're really, really sorry, Dad," they say.

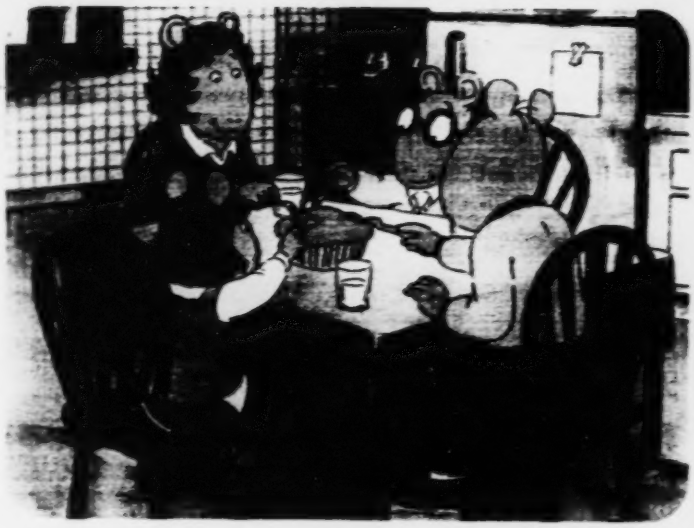




Then Arthur jumps up. "Time to go to the arcade!" he says.
"I hope the Tibbles are still at home!" says D.W, running for her coat.

As Arthur and D.W. are about to head out the door, they look at their dad.
"I feel bad for Dad," says Arthur.
"I'm going to stay home and help him make a new soufflé."
"Me, too!" D.W. decides.

Dad brings the new soufflé to the table.
"This is the most beautiful thing you've ever made!" Mom says.
"No, it isn't," says Dad.
He turns to Arthur and D.W.
"It's the most beautiful thing *we've* ever made!"



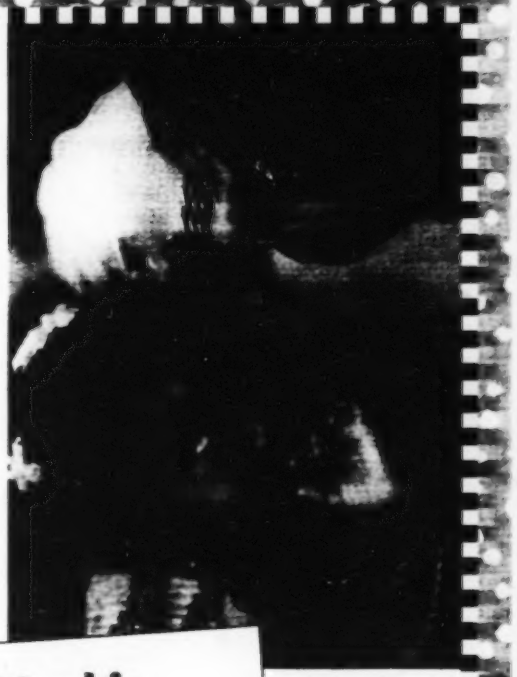
Arthur and D.W. grin from ear to ear. Everyone takes a bite of the soufflé. "Delicious!" they say.

Ask Your Kids:

- **What do you think about what happened in this story?**
- **How did Arthur and D.W. help solve the problem?**
- **Have you ever argued with someone over who was to blame? What happened? How did you solve the problem?**

Watch ARTHUR!

Watch these ARTHUR shows with your children, or ask them to tell you the story. It's a good way to start a conversation about getting along with brothers and sisters. You can find these ARTHUR videos and books at your library, video store, or bookstore. Read the books, too!



Arthur's Baby

Arthur's not sure he wants a new baby sister. All Baby Kate seems to do is cry, especially whenever Arthur comes near. Why doesn't Baby Kate like him?

ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How does Arthur feel about his new baby sister? Why?
- What happens at the end of the story? How does Arthur feel then?
- What do you think are the good and bad things about having a new baby in a family?

D.W.'s Blankie

D.W. has lost her blankie. Where can it be? Arthur follows her all over town, trying to find it.

ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How does Arthur help D.W. in this story?
- What does D.W. say to Arthur when she finally finds her blankie?
- Tell about a time when you helped your brother or sister, or when your brother or sister helped you. How did you feel?

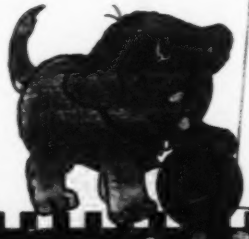
Act It Out!

Cut out the two puppets. Then carefully cut out the holes. Put two fingers through the holes. Your fingers become the puppet's legs.

Put on a puppet play with someone in your family. In your play, Arthur and D.W. have an argument. Then they figure out a way to solve their problem. Use the play ideas below, or make up your own.

Play Idea #1

Arthur wants to watch the Bionic Bunny Holiday Special on TV. But D.W. wants to watch Mary Moo-Cow. How can they solve their problem?



Play Idea #2

D.W. repeats everything Arthur says. It's driving Arthur crazy! How can Arthur get D.W. to stop?

Arthur®
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Arthur

Read On!

The families in these books have fun and resolve quarrels in lots of creative ways. Share some of these great stories with your kids.

Beezus and Ramona by Beverly Cleary. (Camelot) It isn't easy being a big sister to Ramona. (Ages 5–8)

Jamaica Tag-Along by Juanita Havill. (Houghton Mifflin) Jamaica wants to play, but her brother says no. (Ages 4–7)

The Pain and the Great One by Judy Blume. (Dell Publishing) A sister and brother each tell their side of the story. (Ages 5–8)

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats. (Puffin) Peter has a new baby sister and he's not very happy about it. (Ages 3–7)

photo: Lisa Tanner

Tips for Parents: Siblings

How can you help brothers and sisters get along better? Here are some ideas.

1 Appreciate each child as an individual.

- Try to spend a little time alone with each child, talking, reading, cuddling, or doing a favorite activity. It lets your child know that you think he or she is important and special.
- Help your children appreciate each other. For example, when you are all together you might say, *Your baby brother loves that rattle! Look how he's learning to shake it.*

2 Encourage your kids to help each other.

- An older child can help a younger one tie shoes or get something from a high shelf. A younger child can help an older sibling carry things.
- Siblings of all ages can comfort each other when they feel sad.
- Praise your children for helping each other: *Look at how happy your sister looks because you helped her open that door.*

3 Build a sense of family.

- Set aside time for family fun. Choose activities that everyone enjoys. For example, you can bake together, watch movies, or go to the park.
- Tell stories about adventures you've shared as a family and about good times that you had with your own parents and siblings.
- Include rituals in your family life, like special holiday activities, family reunions, and singing or reading together. Family rituals give children a sense of belonging.
- Talk about family values. When your kids get angry, remind them: *Remember, we don't hit in our family when we get mad. What words can you say to Elsa right now?*

PARENTS' CORNER

"I built a relationship between my kids from the very beginning. When Baby Anna smiled I would say, 'Brian, look– she likes you!"—**Jennifer R.**

"Even though my daughter's brothers are far away, I always talk to her about them. I remind her that they still love her. I tell her that when they come to visit, she should always help them and show her love for them."—**Sujey F.**

"It's important to do things together as a family. We watch TV together, take walks, and go to the park."—**Dan M.**

"Every Saturday we get together and we talk. We share everything: what we want, things that are happening to us. We speak about everything."—**Ivelisse M.**

Turn to page 14 for tips on helping your kids work things out when they are angry.

photo: Lisa Tanner

Working It Out

Conflict between siblings isn't always a bad thing. As your children learn to work out their disagreements and accept each other's differences, they'll be gaining valuable experience at solving problems and getting along with other people.

Set the ground rules.

- Say that you will help your children solve their problem. Tell them you are not going to take sides.
- Ask each child if he or she will agree to some ground rules. For example: *Each person gets to tell what happened without anyone else interrupting.* And *No name calling.*
- If your children are very angry, they may need time to cool down before they can start to solve the problem.

Get the stories out.

- Give each child a turn to say what happened and how she or he feels.
- Rephrase what you hear each child say. This gives you a chance to be sure of the facts and makes the child feel heard. It also gives both kids a chance to hear the story from the other person's point of view a second time.

3

State the problem and think of several solutions.

- Focus on the problem both children are having rather than who is to blame. For example, you might say, *We have one TV and two kids who want to watch different shows.*
- Ask, *What can you do so you can both feel OK?* Let each child suggest ideas.

4

Choose a solution.

- Help the children choose a solution that works for everybody and makes everyone feel OK.
- Repeat the solution that was agreed to and talk about how to put it into practice.
- Talk at a later time about how the solution is working.

This information is adapted from the PBS *Ready To Learn about Conflict* Facilitator Manual prepared by Media Education Consultants. © 2000 PBS Ready To Learn.

PARENTS' CORNER

"When my kids fight, I tell them a story. Sometimes it's a story from my own life when I fought with my brothers and sisters, or it's a fable or a fairy tale. The stories show the kids that it's not easy, but there are rewards when you stop fighting and start getting along."—**Julio V.**

"My kids were fighting about a piece of cake and the little one came to me complaining. I got her brother and said, 'It seems we're having a problem here. Let's all take a turn and tell our story, including myself.' Then I helped them negotiate and look at different solutions and choose one that they both agreed on."—**Belkis del R.**

"If the fights get physical, I put my kids in 'time out' so they can cool off a bit. Afterwards we talk about the problem they had. We always end our discussions with apologies. They have to understand that they must take care of each other."—**Ingrid C.**

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There are lots of fun things for you to do with your family on the ARTHUR Web site. Check it out at www.pbskids.org/arthur
Be sure to check out the family conflict resolution game, "You've Got to Be Kidding!"
PBS KIDS

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